

SECTION VII COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

7.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public involvement process described throughout this Section attempted to include all residents and population groups in the study area and did not exclude any persons because of income, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or handicap. Opportunities to obtain maximum public input while preparing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) have included study committee meetings, local officials meetings, public information meetings, and individual meetings with local units of government and other interested groups or individuals. The following is a summary of these activities.

7.1.1 Study Committees

The STH 26 corridor study is divided into three study segments to facilitate development and consideration of alternatives and to better address local and other concerns. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation established study committees for each of the three study area segments. Each county, city, village, and town with potential to be impacted by corridor alternatives was asked to recommend up to three representatives to serve on one or more study committees. All recommended individuals, including many elected officials and technical staff, are study committee members.

Study committees also include individuals with special knowledge about historic preservation, the environment and business. Native American groups were asked about their interest in having representatives on the study committees and they declined. The Forest County Potawatomi Community of Wisconsin, the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin, and the Ho-Chunk Nation requested that study committee meeting minutes be provided for their information and were sent minutes by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Bureau of Environment. County historical societies and museums in Rock, Jefferson, and Dodge Counties were sent a letter informing them of the study, asking if they would like study committee agendas, and if they had questions about the study. No response was received.

The study committees represent the following segments of the project:

- Study Committee #1: South Segment - Janesville to Fort Atkinson (IH 90 to Fort Atkinson Bypass)
- Study Committee #2: Central Segment - Fort Atkinson to Johnson Creek (Fort Atkinson Bypass to Baneck Lane)
- Study Committee #3: North Segment - Johnson Creek to Watertown (Baneck Lane to STH 60-East)

Meetings with each of the Study Committees were informal sessions set up to share information about the study and encourage local input and assist in data gathering for this project. The Study Committees were not voting bodies. Public involvement meetings for the general public as described in section 5.1.3 were held in addition to the Study Committee meetings.

Issues discussed at each of the Study Committees included existing and forecasted traffic volumes, potential solutions including through-town alternatives, typical roadway sections, land use, access points, findings from written comments received at the public information meetings, historic preservation, and the project enumeration process of the Transportation Projects Commission (TPC). Input from these meetings was an important source of information for the ongoing process of refining alternatives on a continuous basis.

Study Committee #1 met seven times in Milton on:

- April 12, 1999
- May 10, 1999
- August 9, 1999
- October 11, 1999
- December 13, 1999
- March 13, 2000
- May 8, 2000

Study Committee #2 met seven times in Jefferson on:

- April 28, 1999
- May 26, 1999
- July 28, 1999
- September 22, 1999
- December 9, 1999
- February 23, 2000
- April 26, 2000

Study Committee #3 met seven times in Watertown on:

- April 14, 1999
- May 12, 1999
- August 11, 1999
- October 13, 1999
- December 8, 1999
- March 8, 2000
- May 10, 2000

7.1.2 Local Officials Meetings

The first Local Public Officials Meeting was held on March 19, 1999, in Fort Atkinson. County, city, village, and township officials from civil divisions representing the entire study area were given an overview of the study, which included the study purpose and study approach. The study approach included a generalized description of known physical and environmental features within a 2-3 mile (3.2-4.8 km) radius of existing STH 26, proposed schedule, public involvement activities, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, study decision making process, and development of study committees. General concerns from local officials included: farmland preservation; truck traffic through cities; the Jefferson County Farm; land use relationships; existing at-grade intersection access to the STH 26 Fort Atkinson Bypass; traffic volumes on town and county roads; protection of the Storrs Lake Wildlife Area and historic sites; and, safety at the STH 60-West interchange.

A second Local Public Officials Meeting was held on January 5, 2000, in Jefferson. County, city, village, and township officials from civil divisions representing the entire study area were invited. Those attending were given an update of the study status prior to the second Public Information Meetings (PIMs; discussed below). An overview of the study from its beginning in February 1999 to the present described how the initial alternatives were modified or dismissed, summarized input from the first PIMs held in June 1999 and subsequent alternative development, and described the alternatives remaining under consideration and to be shown at the second set of PIMs. Planned improvements along the study corridor in the next few years were also briefly described. The state decision making process for major projects and the Transportation Project Commission (TPC) format was reviewed. General concerns from local officials included anticipated schedule for the TPC meeting, need for Johnson Creek roadway improvements, need for early real estate acquisition, floodplain impacts west of Jefferson, project cost, and urban sprawl.

7.1.3 Public Information Meetings

Two sets of public information meetings (PIMs) were held to present corridor alternatives and to solicit public input. The meetings were announced through news releases to area newspapers, radio and television stations, project newsletters, and notices mailed to potentially affected property owners. For convenience to the general public, each series of public information meetings were held at three different locations on three separate dates. The three locations were in the cities of Milton, Jefferson, and Watertown, with the same information presented at each location.

Meetings were conducted in an “open house” format from either 4:00 to 8:00pm or 5:00 to 9:00pm. The first set of PIMs included a brief presentation on the study and a public question and answer session. The second set of PIMs had a video that provided a study overview for the public on continuous display. Both sets of PIMs had staff members from the consultant team and WisDOT, including real estate personnel, available to discuss the project at each of the meetings.

In addition to the two PIMs held to review study alternatives, another PIM was held to review archaeological and historic resources. This latter meeting was held to give the public an opportunity to learn the results of preliminary archaeological and historic studies along the STH 26 alternative corridors and to comment on them.

7.1.3.1 First Public Information Meeting

The first series of PIMs was held on June 9, 1999, in Watertown; June 14, 1999, in Jefferson; and June 21, 1999, in Milton. The meetings were attended by a total of 547 people which included 139 people in Watertown, 231 people in Jefferson, and 177 people in Milton. Display exhibits included 1”=1000’ scale aerial photo maps of the project depicting the preliminary corridor alternative alignments; a four-lane roadway typical section; and a 13 page handout package, including maps of the preliminary alternatives, a project summary, a project schedule, a summary of estimated impacts for corridor alternatives, and a comment form.

General comments received at or following the first PIM held in Milton included the following:

- Concern over impacts to the Milton House and other historic sites along existing alignment. 177 postcards stating opposition to the expansion of STH 26 along the existing corridor were received.
- Besides historical concerns, expansion of STH 26 along existing corridor was opposed because of potential impacts to East Elementary School and Goodrich Park.
- Utilizing the investment of the new four-lane facility between Janesville and Milton was supported.
- Access to IH 90 would improve emergency service on IH 90.
- Safety concerns at the STH 26/CTH N intersection north of Milton.
- Concerns over loss of farmland.
- East bypasses were generally supported because of the need for good access to the commercial and industrial areas in Milton.

General comments received at or following the first PIM held in Jefferson included the following:

- Concerns over loss of farmland, homes, wetlands, and wildlife habitats.

- The effect of an east bypass of Jefferson on the safety of residents and students at St. Coletta School.
- Jefferson's public elementary, middle, and high schools were located in close proximity on west side of Jefferson, and a west bypass would provide good access to these schools.
- A west bypass of Jefferson would accommodate traffic for events at the fairgrounds.
- Building the bypass to the west of Jefferson would be consistent with the Fort Atkinson Bypass.

General comments received at or following the first PIM held in Watertown included the following:

- Truck traffic and the industrial area would be better served with a west bypass of Watertown.
- Access to Watertown Memorial Hospital, located on the northeast side of the city, is better served with an east bypass.
- Safety concerns along STH 26 north of Watertown.
- Environmental concerns included loss of farmland and wetlands.
- Utilizing the STH 16 bypass on the northeast side of Watertown makes economic and environmental sense.

7.1.3.2 Second Public Information Meeting

The second series of PIMs was held on January 10, 2000, in Jefferson; January 11, 2000, in Milton; and January 19, 2000, in Watertown. The meetings were attended by a total of 652 people which included 280 people in Watertown, 235 people in Jefferson, and 137 people in Milton. Many of the preliminary alternatives were either modified or dismissed based on impacts associated with the alternatives, safety and design considerations, comments received from the June 1999 PIMs, discussions with the study committees, and other communications received. The remaining alternatives were shown at these meetings. The detailed study alternatives were selected after these meetings.

Display exhibits included 1"=1000' and 1"=500' scale aerial photo maps of the project depicting the study alternative alignments; a four-lane roadway typical section; a summary evaluation matrix; and a handout package, including maps of the preliminary alternatives, a project summary, a project schedule, a summary of estimated impacts for corridor alternatives, and a comment form. Maps showing the proposed 2001-02 improvements in Johnson Creek were also displayed. A continuously running video was shown providing an overview of the study area and project.

General comments received at or following the second PIM held in Milton included the following:

- Concerns over impact of Alternative S3 to rural residential areas including Oak Ridge and The Reserve Subdivisions.
- Support for Alternative S2 was based on a number of factors, including: less impact to the Milton House and other historic sites; less impact to residences; less impact to the Storrs Lake Wildlife Area; less impact to farmland; using land from both the town and city of Milton; more compatibility with future land use plans; and, better access to the north side of Milton.
- Alternative S3 was preferred because it would not impact the Milton House and other historic sites, was the route previously mapped by the City of Milton, would not pass through the city, and would allow for more future growth for the City of Milton.
- Support for an interchange on the south side of Milton.

- Farmland was a concern, with suggestions to preserve more farmland, minimize severance damage, and locate the highway in an area less suitable for farming with relatively minor adjustments.
- There was little support for a through town alternative in Milton.
- Concerns over residential and farm access onto and crossing STH 26.

General comments received at or following the second PIM held in Jefferson included the following:

- Alternative C2 (near west bypass) was supported because it provides better access to the schools, fairgrounds, and south industrial area in Jefferson.
- USH 18 from the west to downtown Jefferson would better serve truck traffic than USH 18 from the east.
- The Jefferson west side bypass matches up better with the Fort Atkinson bypass since it is also on the west side.
- Concerns over impacts to St. Coletta School with an east bypass of Jefferson.
- An east side bypass, particularly Alternative C3 (near east), would provide better access to Jefferson's north industrial park.
- A Jefferson east side bypass would have less impact to the area's multi-generation family farms and the natural environment, particularly the floodplains located west of the city.
- There was little support for a through town alternative in Jefferson.
- Concerns over land preservation. Alternatives C1 (far west bypass) and C4 (far east bypass) were not compatible with current land use plans and would encourage urban sprawl. Alternative C2 (near west bypass) was supported because the floodplains near USH 18 would stay undeveloped.

General comments received at or following the second PIM held in Watertown included the following:

- A west bypass would better serve the industrial and residential development on the west side of Watertown.
- Support for the connection of STH 26, STH 19, and STH 16 under Alternative N1 (west).
- Requests for Alternative N1 (west) to be located further west of Watertown.
- Requests for an interchange at CTH A to improve access both in Watertown and in the rural areas.
- Support for an east bypass of Watertown to connect STH 26 to STH 16.
- Little support for a through town alternative in Watertown.
- Suggestions for alternative refinements that would minimize farmland impacts, including severances.
- Concerns over residential and farm access onto and crossing STH 26.

7.1.3.3 Public Information Meeting for Archaeological and Historic Resources

On Thursday, January 27, 2000, a public information meeting on archaeological and historic resources was held at the Jefferson City Hall, in Jefferson from 4:30pm to 6:30pm. Notice informing people and groups about the meeting was included in the approximately 2,000 Second PIM meeting notices that were distributed to potentially affected property owners, local officials, and interested citizens. Notice of the meeting was also included on display signs at each of the Second PIM meetings; in press releases that went out to area media, and in letter notices sent to Historic Preservation Commissions, area historical societies, Milton House representatives, and Native American groups. The meeting was held to give the

public an opportunity to learn results and comment on preliminary archaeological and historic studies along the STH 26 alternative corridors. A representative of SHPO was present at the meeting and was available to answer questions. A total of 46 people registered at the meeting.

On display were 1"=1000' scale aerial maps showing location of corridor alternatives under consideration, and 1"=200' scale aerial maps showing through town alternatives for Milton, Jefferson, and Watertown. A through town Rail Corridor alternative was also displayed for Watertown. Historic architecture properties that were either listed or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) were labeled on the maps. Comment forms were provided for attendees to submit written comments.

A brief overview of the study and a summary of the alternatives under study in each of the three segments were provided. The Section 106 Cultural Resources process was described. It was explained that the National Preservation Act of 1966 requires that federally funded projects consider impacts on important archaeological and historic resources.

The archaeological consultant for the study described the methodology and results of the preliminary study for archaeological resources. This study determined that there are numerous reported archaeological sites in the areas of the Rock and Crawfish Rivers. No burial mounds were found within the study alternative corridors, and it is estimated that the density and significance of archaeological sites on the west and east sides of Jefferson were similar.

The historic consultant for the study described the methodology and results of the preliminary study for historic architectural properties. Results of the study indicate a number of historic properties and four historic districts that are either listed or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Most of these historic properties are located within the urban communities of Milton, Jefferson, and Watertown. Many rural properties have been altered over the years and making them ineligible for listing on the NRHP.

The meeting concluded with a questions and answers session. Following the meeting, the public was given the opportunity to review the exhibits, ask questions of the staff, and comment.

7.1.4 Additional Meetings

Various local group and individual meetings were held to provide project updates and address local concerns. Twelve meetings have been held with officials from individual towns and cities in the study area. Project briefing meetings were held with the Jefferson County Board and the highway committees from Rock, Jefferson and Dodge Counties. Numerous meetings and telephone conversations with potentially affected property owners occurred. Two meetings were held with St. Coletta of Wisconsin to determine issues of concern to their operation and to review alternatives.

7.1.5 Project Notification and Newsletters

Letters were sent to local officials inviting them to a meeting on March 19, 1999 to inform them of the initiation of the study and to announce and organize the Study Committees.

Notices were distributed to potentially affected property owners, local officials, interested citizens and identified local interest groups prior to the first public information meetings in June 1999 to inform them about the study and to announce the upcoming meetings.

Letters were sent to local officials inviting them to a meeting on January 5, 2000 to inform them of the second public information meetings in January 2000 and to provide an update prior to the meetings.

Newsletters were distributed to potentially affected property owners, local officials, interested citizens, and identified local interest groups prior to the second public information meetings in January 2000. The newsletter included highlights of the upcoming meetings, maps and descriptions of the proposed alternatives, the project schedule, and project contact names, addresses, and telephone numbers.

Notices were also distributed to potentially affected property owners, local officials, interested citizens, and identified local interest groups prior to the second public information meetings to announce the upcoming public information meetings.

7.1.6 News Media

News releases were distributed to area media, including newspapers, radio, and television, to initially announce the study and to announce upcoming public information meetings. Contact names, addresses, and telephone numbers were provided as part of the releases.

7.1.7 Toll-free Telephone

A toll-free telephone number was established at the start of the study. All calls were logged, and when requested, specific information was provided back to the caller.

7.2 AGENCY COORDINATION

7.2.1 Scoping Process

Scoping letters were sent on April 6 & 7, 1999, to state and federal agencies and Native American groups to familiarize them with the project and to solicit their interest and concerns. An Agency Scoping Meeting that included a field review of the study corridor area was held on April 27, 1999. Preliminary alternatives were developed based on constraints identified during the scoping process, involving early coordination with federal and state agencies and Native American groups, as well as Study Committee Meetings and public involvement described above. Coordination with agencies has been ongoing throughout the preparation of the EIS.

Scoping letters were mailed to the following state and federal agencies and tribal entities:

Federal Highway Administration
Wisconsin Dept of Natural Resources, Southern District
Wisconsin Dept of Transportation, District 1 and various Bureaus
Wisconsin Dept of Administration
Dept. of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection
State Historical Society
State of Wisconsin Dept of Labor & Human Resources
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
U.S. Dept of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation
U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Dept of Interior, Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Dept of Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service

U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service
U.S. Forest Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Inc.
Bad River Band of Lake Superior
Forest County Potawatomi Community
Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior
Lac Du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior
Oneida Tribe of Indians
Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior
Sokaogon Chippewa (Mole Lake)
St. Croix Chippewa Indians
Stockbridge Munsee Community of Wisconsin
Ho-Chunk Nation
Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin

Agencies expressing an interest or concerns with the project included: U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS); DOI National Park Service (NPS); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); U.S. Corps of Engineers (COE); Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR); Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP); and State Historical Society of Wisconsin (SHSW). Native American Tribes expressing an interest or concerns with the project include Ho-Chunk Nation, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Forest County Potawatomi Community, and Oneida Tribe of Indians. Following is a summary of the agency and tribal involvement.

7.2.2 State Agencies

State Historical Society of Wisconsin (SHSW)

April 8, 1999	Letter from SHSW responding to initial scoping letter and noting new Section 106 requirements for historical and archaeological review of highway projects that went into effect June 1, 1997.
April 27, 1999	Scoping meeting and field review. Areas of concern included the Milton House, archaeological resources between the Crawfish and Rock Rivers west of Jefferson, Native American participation, and public involvement.
October 25, 1999	Coordination meeting to review historic architecture and archaeological findings to date.
December 15, 1999	Meeting to review architecture/history survey summary. Determinations of Eligibility (DOE) required for the Draft EIS was agreed upon.
May 24, 2000	Notification from SHSW that they concurred with recommendation of eligibility for National Register listing for Slight's Standard Filling Station, and Alverno Cottages. The William Graham Farmhouse and the Witte Farmstead are not eligible for the National Register.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)

April 27, 1999	Scoping meeting and field review. Areas of concern included the Storrs Lake Wildlife Area east of Milton and minimizing impacts to wetlands and threatened or endangered species.
July 1, 1999	Letter from WDNR identifying endangered resources in project area.
October 27, 1999	Field review meeting to identify concerns. Environmental features were viewed in each of the three study segments.
January 24, 2000	Letter from WDNR commenting on Concurrence Point #1 (Purpose and Need) and preliminary alternatives for project.
February 24, 2000	Field meeting discussing bypass alternatives for city of Jefferson.
March 30, 2000	Meeting with WDNR to discuss modifications to C2 alternative on near west side of city of Jefferson. Provided maps of modification and corridor alternative locations for South and Central segments.
April 10, 2000	Meeting with WDNR, Town of Jefferson Chairperson, State Representative, and WisDOT to discuss modification to near west side Jefferson bypass alternative C2, and possible affect on Crawfish River and associated floodplains.
April 14, 2000	Letter from WDNR providing more specific location data for natural areas.
April 26, 2000	WDNR representative attended Jefferson Study Committee Meeting to discuss review role in project and answer questions.
June 12, 2000	Meeting with WDNR, Bureau of Air Management, discussing exemption for air pollution control permit for STH 26, Janesville to Watertown project.
June 19, 2000	Letter from WDNR, Bureau of Air Management, stating exemption for air pollution control permit for STH 26, Janesville to Watertown project.

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP)

April 27, 1999	Scoping meeting and field review. Areas of concern included minimizing the acquisition or severance of farmland and maintaining access to farmland.
June 25, 1999	Phone call from DATCP inquiring about results of June 1999 public information meetings.
August 26, 1999	Letter from DATCP confirming presence of federally listed threatened species (Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid) in project area.
December 20, 1999	Meeting with DATCP at affected farm property owner's residence to discuss farm operation and west Watertown bypass corridor location.

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| January 21, 2000 | Phone call from DATCP inquiring about results of January 2000 public information meetings. |
| May 10, 2000 | Meeting with DATCP at affected farm property owner's residence to discuss west Watertown bypass corridor location and estimated acreage requirements. |

Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Bureau of Aeronautics

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| April 7, 1999 | Letter from WisDOT, Bureau of Aeronautics, commenting on airports in study area. |
| June 13, 2000 | Letter from WisDOT, Bureau of Aeronautics, commenting on airports in study area, and providing Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) on obstacles near airports. |

7.2.3 Federal Agencies

US Army Corps of Engineers (COE)

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| April 27, 1999 | Scoping meeting and field review. An area of concern included minimizing impacts to wetlands. |
| May 25, 1999 | Letter from COE indicating that they will serve as a cooperating agency for this project. |
| December 20, 1999 | Letter from COE concurring with Purpose and Need for project (Concurrence Point #1). |
| December 29, 1999 | Meeting with COE to discuss listing of potential wetland impacts in EIS. |
| January 11, 2000 | Representative from COE attended PIM in Milton to answer questions from individuals. |
| January 19, 2000 | Representative from COE attended PIM in Watertown to answer questions from individuals. |
| June 9, 2000 | Letter from COE concurring with alternatives carried forward for Detailed Study (Concurrence Point #2). |

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

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| October 27, 1999 | Field review meeting to identify concerns. Environmental features were viewed in each of the three study segments. |
| December 16, 1999 | Letter from EPA commenting on Concurrence Point #1 – Purpose and Need. |
| February 17, 2000 | Project review meeting with EPA. Reviewed comments on Purpose and Need and overall project issues. |

May 12, 2000 Letter from EPA concurring with alternatives carried forward for Detailed Study (Concurrence Point #2).

US Department of Interior – Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&W)

May 5, 1999 Phone call from USF&W indicating concerns with project and discussing federally listed threatened species (Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid) in project area.

May 26, 1999 Letter from USF&W indicating interest and concerns with project.

May 4, 2000 Letter from USF&W concurring with alternatives carried forward for Detailed Study (Concurrence Point #2).

US Department of Interior – National Park Service (NPS)

April 22, 1999 Letter from NPS responding to notice of intent to prepare EIS and indication of Glacial Drumlin Trail and potential Ice Age National Scenic Trail in study limits.

June 28, 1999 Letter from NPS notifying interested individuals of review meeting for future Ice Age Trail crossing of STH 26.

July 19, 1999 Field review meeting for future Ice Age Trail crossing of STH 26.

August 5, 1999 Letter from NPS with meeting notes from July 19, 1999, concerning the future Ice Age Trail crossing STH 26.

November 23, 1999 Phone call from NPS discussing Concurrence Point #1 – Purpose and Need.

November 30, 1999 Letter from NPS concurring with Purpose and Need for project.

February 25, 2000 Phone call from NPS discussing future Ice Age Trail location in Milton along STH 59 and Storrs Lake Road. Confirmed that Alternatives S2 & S3 would have a grade separated (overpass) crossing of Storrs Lake Road.

May 5, 2000 Letter from NPS concurring with alternatives carried forward for Detailed Study (Concurrence Point #2).

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

March 10, 2000 Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Forms (AD-1006) received for project.

7.2.4 Other Agencies

Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians

April 8, 1999 Letter from Historic Preservation Officer indicating that project is outside of their jurisdiction.

Menominee Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin

April 27, 1999 Scoping meeting and field review. Areas of concern included minimizing impacts to cultural resources and avoiding all burial sites.

Ho-Chunk Nation

September 30, 1999 Letter from Ho-Chunk Nation indicating interest in project.

Forest County Potawatomi Community

April 27, 1999 Scoping meeting and field review. Areas of concern included minimizing impacts to cultural resources and avoiding all burial sites.

Oneida Tribe of Indians in Wisconsin

No response received to date.